The DTC Collective is a community that brings together influential, global voices to realize the potential of digital retail. The group was founded to give retail execs an opportunity to share otherwise behind closed doors strategies for dealing with the rapid shifts in the industry, from the mounting privacy regulations to the massive shift to digital through the pandemic. The founding members saw a need for a community to come together and discuss how to do things differently in an all direct-to-consumer world, and help actively shape the trajectory of the retail industry.

With the heightened pressure to meet shoppers wherever they are with curated communications, this Winter the DTC Collective convened for the first time in 2022 to discuss the risks and opportunities in mobile, as it becomes a key lever to a shopper-first approach. Below, see a summary of key themes that surfaced during the conversation.

Meeting the shopper where they are means you have to meet them right in their pockets. And for the leaders that have, it’s a conversion engine.

The opportunities in mobile are vast — done correctly, it offers an unparalleled level of frictionless convenience to shoppers that delivers huge revenue opportunities. Brands that launched mobile programs over the past few years have seen incredible engagement and conversion from their loyal shoppers. But, retailers need to make sure that mobile strategies are driving incremental revenue and keeping all shoppers at the center of the conversation.

MEMBERS OF THE COLLECTIVE STATED

"Mobile is by far our predominant traffic channel. We’re looking at doing a mobile app this year because of the size and momentum, which we can now sustain."

"We’re very excited to focus on mobile now. We’ve seen nice customer growth over the past two years. Now we’re focused on dollars per customer by getting more value out of existing customers and leaning into owned channels with our loyalty program as a subset of that."

Bridge the URL and IRL divide for an omnichannel experience

Mobile may seem like a new frontier for retailers that haven’t fully adopted mobile features or are implementing mobile strategies now, but it should really be a holistic experience of the opportunities your brand already offers — just more convenient for shoppers. Mobile should enhance the entire brand experience, not take away from it and create more gaps. For example, store associates should be armed with data coming in from digital experiences and be ready to understand shopper style and preferences. Mobile could also ease some of the store experiences that are currently run at the register, like applying for credit cards or signing up for loyalty programs. Having that level of convenience and understanding preferences leads to higher loyalty and repeat purchases.
QR Codes made a comeback this year, led by restaurants during the pandemic. Now, retailers are bringing it back across channels and seeing huge success. Engaging shoppers on their phone starts with QR codes that can lead to pages, promotions, apps and more and can be published on any platform. Shoppers can walk right into a store and get all of the information they need about a product from the QR code and connect it to the mobile experience in a number of ways, from an augmented reality experience so you can see the product in your home and more. By literally touching phone to product, you’re not only bridging the digital and physical gap within an inch, but you’re also streaming all of that critical data on your shoppers and the products they’re interacting with between the two as well.

MEMBERS OF THE COLLECTIVE STATED

“One of the reasons we want to get into the mobile app is for the repeat purchaser. We have a core group of people that love our brand — they engage in the Facebook community and take advantage of early access — they all come in through mobile. We want to create a special experience and more robust program for these people.”

The Three C’s of Mobile for Creating and Nurturing Loyal Shoppers

Mobile has a high return rate for the most loyal, core group of shoppers because they’re ready to embrace the features they love on mobile. Mobile programs that are ready for loyal shoppers (and ready to nurture all of those potential loyal shoppers) should include three foundations for driving repeat purchases from shoppers anywhere in their lifecycle.

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<td>Apps close the gap between discovery and conversion thanks to a more frictionless experience. With a mobile app, brands can keep shoppers logged in more easily with saved payment methods to create a seamless checkout experience. Shoppers can always be ready to customize their cart and wishlist more quickly and conveniently with an app as well, rather than extending the time from discovery to cart.</td>
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<td>Communities that are created on channels like Facebook and Instagram should extend to mobile. Loyalty programs that allow shoppers to easily review, collect loyalty points and early access should extend seamlessly to mobile programs with even more opportunities to connect and convert. Another avenue for building community that brands are exploring is with live shopping connected to quick conversions within the app.</td>
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<td>Content created for mobile should be an extension of your brand’s experience — with no gaps in experience. Whether your shoppers are scanning a QR code, browsing their mobile app or receiving an SMS message, the content should be tailored to their preferences and experiences.</td>
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New fundamentals of the future now

Brands spend time investing in and optimizing channels — mobile should be no exception. Fundamental features of mobile strategy should include the new basics of the digital age.

As retailers continue to focus on loyalty and create new experiences that keep shoppers at the center, mobile becomes a more and more important channel for brands. But failing to deliver on the promise of personalization and neglecting to curate mobile experiences will make mobile a misinvestment. By developing a clear data practice that channels all of the personalization and curation that shoppers experience across other channels and providing clear attribution measures, you can make the most of mobile (and turn your retail data into incremental profit).
Personalization: When it comes to mobile personalization, don’t phone it in. Your mobile experiences should carry the same level of custom care as your site experiences. If your site surfaces personalized recommendations to shoppers — your mobile program should do the same. From the app landing page to the notifications they receive from push or SMS, shoppers should expect that same level of care and curation — whether it’s product category, price, size, color, markdown preference or preferred channel.

Predictive: Predictive powers your mobile program by bringing shoppers what they’ll want to see next from your brand and predicting their next best find (whether it’s a product or a category), as well as deciphering what channels shoppers actually want to be communicated on and learning over time how those channel preferences change. Bringing together product recommendations and preferred channels boosts conversion and preserves margin.

Advanced Search: In a catalog of 50,000 skus, search is critical in helping shoppers surface the products they’re looking for. A search algorithm that finds the best and most relevant to shoppers will rely on a product catalog that digs into all the nitty gritty details. Want to get more advanced? Connecting all of your customer and retail data to search to supercharge those efforts brings a human touch to the search machine with AI learning. And it’s all about real estate on the screen — mobile screens are small, and there’s less opportunity for discovery when you can only fit so many products on the page. Each search needs to count so you’re surfacing the very best for shoppers.

MEMBERS OF THE COLLECTIVE STATED

“I think about search when I think about the customer experience. It becomes more important in a mobile first world because of real estate. It’s connected to mobile as opposed to just thinking about it as an outbound channel.”

“With a hybrid algorithm of AI learning, we can go in from a human perspective and boost in-stock products. Combo of what it knows about you and your preferences, sorting product categories and tailoring search results.

FOR INQUIRIES RELATED TO THE DTC COLLECTIVE AND BECOMING A MEMBER, PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE.